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**MAN INDICTED FOR USING STOLEN CREDIT CARD AND ATM CARD NUMBERS**

SACRAMENTO-- United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury returned a one-count indictment charging CLAUDIU HOTEA, 32, of Riverside, California with access device fraud.

This case is the product of a joint investigation by the Placer County Sheriff's Department and the United States Secret Service.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Matthew Segal, who is prosecuting the case, the complaint in this case alleges that HOTEA committed access device fraud by "skimming." "Skimming" means capturing the electronic data on an ATM or credit card and then using that data to access the account with which it is associated. HOTEA has a prior conviction for access device fraud, which was prosecuted in the Central District of California

According to court documents filed in this case, HOTEA was arrested inside the Thunder Valley Casino on January 24, 2006 with five gift cards encoded with stolen PIN numbers, and approximately \$1400 in cash. HOTEA allegedly knew the gift cards were encoded with stolen PIN numbers he obtained from associates. He ran up approximately \$10,000 in unauthorized charges from these five accounts.

If convicted, the maximum penalty under federal law for a second offense of access device fraud is 20 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and a three-year term of supervised release.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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